

ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY
Electronic Communication Systems

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the appropriate use of the University's email system by its students, faculty, and staff. It addresses personal use of email, limitations on the use of email, archiving email, official University email communications, and user responsibilities.

II. Policy

University electronic communication accounts are provided and supported by the State of North Carolina to support the missions of the University.

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure the appropriate use of the University's electronic communication systems (ECS) by its students, faculty, and staff. ECS are tools provided by the University to complement traditional methods of communication and to improve education and administrative efficiency. Users have the responsibility to use these resources in an efficient, effective, ethical, and lawful manner. Use of the University's electronic communication systems evidences the user's agreement to be bound by this Policy. Violations of this Policy may result in restriction of access to the University email system and/or other appropriate disciplinary action.

III. Personal Use of ECS

While personal use of University ECS accounts is not prohibited by law, and while the University does not routinely monitor any user's ECS content, privacy of personal ECS content residing on or transmitted through University equipment is not assured. Because the University is a State entity, all data transmitted or stored using ECS capabilities are subject to the requirements of North Carolina's Public Records law, which generally requires that any person may have access to State records. Courts may order the production of University records, including ECS records, in connection with litigation. Appropriate law enforcement and other officials may, consistent with law, have access to documents for purposes of investigating allegations of violations of law or of University policy. Given such considerations, but subject to the requirements of the North Carolina Public Records Act, no University faculty member, staff member, or student should use a University ECS account with the expectation that any particular ECS content, whether personal or business-related, will be private.

IV. Limitations on the Use of ECS

The legal and regulatory environment surrounding University ECS creates a number of other limitations on the use of University ECS accounts. Most apply uniformly to the use of all State-provided resources. They may be briefly summarized:

- A. ECS accounts are for the exclusive use of the individual to whom they are assigned.

- B. No use is permitted that conflicts with the requirements of civil or criminal law, including but not limited to laws relating to pornography, defamation, intellectual property infringement, and illegal discrimination, or conflicts with any applicable policy of the Board of Governors or of Elizabeth City State University, such as use in support of partisan political activities.
- C. No use is permitted that constitutes the unauthorized exchange of proprietary information or any other privileged, confidential, or sensitive information.
- D. The knowing transmission of a message containing a computer virus or that misrepresents the identity of the sender is prohibited.
- E. The use of or attempt to use the accounts of others without their permission is prohibited.
- F. Personal use cannot interfere with a University employee's obligation to carry out University duties in a timely and effective manner.
- G. The personal use cannot involve sending or soliciting chain letters or sending unsolicited bulk mail messages (e.g., "junk mail," "spam," or "MLM – Multi Level Marketing"), or otherwise overloading the University's electronic mail system or negatively interfering with system performance.
- H. Uses that result in commercial gain or personal profit are not permitted, except as allowed under University intellectual property policies and the external activities for pay policy; however, in no case may University ECS be used for solicitation of an external activity for pay.
- I. No personal use may state or imply University sponsorship or endorsement of its message.

V. Archiving ECS messages

Individuals are responsible for saving or archiving ECS messages that constitute University records in accordance with Retention, Disposition, and Security of University Records Policy. ECS messages that are of a temporary ephemeral, or transient nature and have only reference or administrative value may be deleted when the user has determined that their reference value has ended. Due to limited resources, the Division of Information Technology department has the right to restrict the amount of user space on the message server as necessary and to purge and remove ECS accounts of students who have not registered for a semester.

VI. Official University Electronic Communications

- A. When using ECS as an official means of communication, students, faculty, and staff should apply the same professionalism, discretion, and standards that they would use in written business communication. Furthermore, students, faculty, and staff should not communicate anything via ECS that they would not be prepared to say publicly.
- B. Students, faculty, and staff may not disclose University information in ECS messages that they are privileged to access because of their position at the University.
- C. Those wishing to transmit broadcast electronic messages containing essential University announcements to students, faculty, and/or staff must obtain approval from the appropriate administrative authority. Within the scope of their authority, only the Offices of a Department Chairperson, Director, Dean, Executive Director, Chief of Staff, Vice

Chancellor, or Chancellor may authorize the transmission of broadcast messages to a wide audience of students, faculty, and staff.

- D. Appropriate broadcast of electronic messages may include, but is not limited to, the following types of announcements:
 - 1. Emergency or unforeseen campus-wide events notification (e.g., cancellation of classes or closing of the University due to inclement weather or emergency);
 - 2. Important campus deadline notification (e.g., last day of drop/add for students); or
 - 3. Improved services to students, faculty, or staff that directly impact all members of the affected group.
- E. By contrast, broadcast electronic messages should not be used for non-essential matters such as publicizing campus events. Broadcast email messages should be sent only to the affected group (students, faculty, or staff, or a subgroup of one of those groups) and should be of critical importance to that group.

VII. User Responsibilities

The ITS maintains the University's official ECS; faculty, staff, and students are expected to read their ECS messages on a regular basis. Faculty, staff, or students who choose to use another email system are responsible for receiving University-wide broadcast messages, notices, and personal mail by checking the University's official electronic mail system, newsgroups, and the University's World Wide Web homepage. An ECS message regarding University matters sent from an administrative office, faculty, or staff member is considered to be an official notice.